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# MODERN REVOLUTIONS AND THEIR RESULTS.

BY KARL BLIND.

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You ask me to give an article "showing the result of the labors of great revolutionists in our times, and the acquiescence of the European world in projects which were regarded as wholly destructive and inherently evil." It is a vast subject on which a great deal might be said. Still, in accordance with your wish, I will dash off a brief sketch, adding those anecdotal points and reminiscences which you suggest. Let me begin with a republic! When we were young, the Swiss Confederacy was an ill-assorted conglomerate of aristocratically-governed or priest-ridden cantons, each of which maintained its own sovereignty, to the detriment of all political cohesion. An ultramontane Separatist League (*Sonderbund*) was eating into its vitals. Neighboring monarchical powers, jealous of the progress of popular freedom, or aiming at the dismemberment of the Alpine Commonwealth (this was the design of the French Government), did their utmost, in order to tear off some slice of Swiss territory, to favor the schemes of the Jesuitic Secessionists, and to prevent the reform of Switzerland at large. The political helplessness and disgrace of that loosely-knit Confederacy was looked upon by royalist reactionaries as a mainstay of European order.

I vividly remember the breathless interest with which we followed for years the attempts made by the revolutionary free corps of "Young Switzerland," as it was called, to unseat the priestlings and the haughty patricians in various cantons. I recollect the delight with which the successful barricade fight and democratic revolution of Geneva was hailed. That local revolution was the harbinger of the final triumph of the Liberals over the "Sonder-

bund" which took place in 1847. The first token of German sympathy was sent in that year to the Tagsatzung—that is, to the representatives of the Swiss people—from Mannheim, then one of the headquarters of Radicalism. The address was drawn up by the writer of these recollections, and passed for being a bold step indeed, so oppressive and so tyrannically Argus-eyed was the rule of the princely Diet at Frankfort. Switzerland, regenerated by the overthrow of the Separatist League in a series of battles, gained immensely in freedom and national unity as well as in military effectiveness. In most cantons an excellent system of popular instruction has since been introduced. A citizen army of over 200,000, with an additional landsturm or last levy of 262,000, guards the independence of the country. No power at present thinks of encroaching upon Swiss sovereignty or territorial integrity. In some ways the constitution of the mountain republic has latterly even served as a model for France; namely, as regards the election of the executive, including its president, by the combined two legislatures (*Stände-Rath* and *National-Rath*). Had this been done in France as far back as 1848 instead of appealing to the ignorant masses for the election of a president, Louis Napoleon would never have had a chance of rising to supreme power, and twenty years of vile despotism might have been spared to that country.

I do not wish to dwell too much on what has been achieved in Germany. Time was when her prisons were filled with thousands of men, young and old, whose crime consisted in having aspired to the restoration of our unity as a nation and to the convocation of a parliament. The flower of our university youth were kept for years in dungeons. A "Central Commission of Political Inquisition," established at Mayence, extended its ramifications everywhere. The national tricolor, secretly worn by students under the shirt, was treated as a symbol of high treason. Eminent patriots, like Jahn and Arndt, who had powerfully aided in the overthrow of the Napoleonic yoke, were subjected to the meanest persecution, although their political moderation, their adherence to kingly government, was beyond a doubt.

All this occurred soon after the wars of Liberation, when the German people had sacrificed their blood and their treasure in a tremendous struggle. The princes, restored to power, broke in many cases all faith and promises made in the hour of danger. The

Prussian king, Frederick William III., was foremost in this perfidy. No parliament was granted by him, in spite of his solemn promise. The same in Austria. In both countries it required an armed rising, a fight on the barricades, in 1848, before the people's wishes were fulfilled and their rights acknowledged.

The French Revolution of July, 1830, and the Polish rising which came in its wake, had for some time given a fresh spur to the hopes of German Liberals. Curiously enough, however, shortly before 1848, some of the best men, weary of waiting, seemed to lose much of their confidence in a near future of deliverance. This strain of melancholy feeling I detected in several of the chief leaders of the Liberal cause, who then honored me with their fullest trust, in spite of the great dissimilarity in our ages. I remember such conversations with Adam von Itzstein and Welcker, the prominent champions of the Constitutional movement, and with Professor Kapp, the philosopher, all members of the Baden Chamber. Kapp imagined "a hundred years might elapse before a fresh great Revolution would come." Even Frederick Hecker, who, with Gustav von Struve, afterwards bravely led the Republican rising of 1848, had a few years before, in a fit of despair, resolved upon pitching his tent in Algeria, never to see Germany again. Hecker was then in the prime of life, not far advanced beyond thirty, but in his temperament given to sudden ups and downs. I do not know how it was that some of us, much younger than he, foresaw with certainty, as in a bright vision, what was inevitably coming. It seemed a thousand pities that a force like Hecker should be lost. An address of Heidelberg citizens, suggested and drawn up by me and sent to him, recalled Hecker from his Algerian roamings and projects to serve in the Baden Chamber. All over Germany, in the early part of the Revolution, which broke out a few years later, there was no name more popular among the masses than his.

I pass over the dynastic Reign of Terror which came after the defeat of the popular upheaval, as well as over the "fratricidal war" of 1866 and the truly glorious war of 1870-71. Looking at the present German Empire, I confess I am one of those who do not regard our national unity as complete without our former federal provinces of Austria, which we lost in 1866. Nor do I, considering what even Italy has achieved, admire the complicated system of the existing German constitution, let alone parlia-

mentary government in the true popular sense. Still, thinking of the days when we had, ever and anon, to go to prison under a charge of high treason—a fate once shared even by my wife—when, for the sake of a united and free Germany, we fought, with arms in hand, were court-martialled, and loaded with chains day and night in underground casemates ; remembering all this tumultuous strife and those sufferings in solitary confinement within fortress walls, it is impossible not to feel that some success has been achieved, in spite of that temporary terrible reaction which in 1849 swept hundreds of thousands into a gory grave or into exile in distant lands. Germany has now a central parliament of her own. The censorship of the press is abolished. No longer are criminal charges before her courts of justice dealt with in secret by Government-appointed judges ; but juries decide now, in accordance with our oldest national custom. Communal self-administration also has become a reality. A uniform criminal code and a common code of civil procedure have been introduced. There is uniformity of coin, weight, and measure now ; whereas, formerly, each State, large or small, maintained, in all these things, a system of its own, to the almost incredible disadvantage of trade and commerce. No man can buy himself free any more, by money, from the duty of defending the Fatherland, as was once the case in some German States. Schleswig-Holstein, which rose heroically in 1848-50, but was betrayed by princely governments, is now an integral part of Germany. So is Alsace-Lorraine, thanks to a war frivolously forced upon us by France. Again, a navy has been created, and thus the glorious traditions of our Hanseatic League have been revived, only with a wider national scope. More recently, the German flag has been planted in colonies beyond sea. All these results are in accordance with the aims of the revolutionary movement of 1848-49 ; and we can but hope that, by and by, there will be some further progress in the same direction.

Was not Italy once “a mere geographical idea” ? Prince Metternich satirically said so, and he wanted to keep her in that condition. Even when, in the days of the Revolution, more than forty years ago, republics were founded at Rome, in Tuscany, and in Venice, the outlook soon became gloomy again for the Italian nation. French and Austrian troops overthrew these commonwealths. A belief gained ground amongst but too many

that long political subjection had rendered the people of the peninsula unfit for a sustained strenuous effort.

Here, a little personal fact may be mentioned. When at Paris, in 1849, as a member of a diplomatic mission from revolutionized southwestern Germany, I found the French capital in complete turmoil, owing to the attack made by the army of Louis Bonaparte upon the Roman Republic, which was then governed by Mazzini, Saffi, and Armellini. Under the leadership of Ledru-Rollin and other chiefs of the "Mountain" party, an unsuccessful attempt was made to overthrow Napoleon. The great demonstration in the streets which marched along the Boulevards to the National Assembly was dispersed by General Changarnier. I happened to be at the very point—the Rue de la Paix, close to the Madeleine Church—where the cavalry rode into the mass of men. By the merest chance I narrowly escaped the sword thrust of one of the police, who, preceding the troops for the seeming purpose of a legal dissolution of the manifestation, sprang with tiger-like agility into the crowd with drawn weapons.

Being some days afterwards—quite without reference to this event—arrested, in violation of the laws of nations, as one implicated in the attempt to bring succor to the Roman Republic, I used the involuntary leisure afforded me in the prison of La Force for beginning the study of Italian. I did so in a doubly curious way—namely, first, by taking up Silvio Pellico's book, "My Prison Life," which had a French translation at the bottom of each page; and by not using any grammar or even dictionary, but going straight into the language, with the aid of French as well as Latin lore. Later on I filled up the gaps by a more systematic application. What I thus had learned in prison, from the work of one who had suffered cruelly in dungeons for the cause of his own fatherland, stood me afterwards in good stead, when coöperating for many years with men like Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Saffi.

What dreary years of apparent hopelessness they, like other exiles, had to go through! I had known Felice Orsini, and I remember the shudder that went through the popular parties of Europe when, at Paris, on a gray winter morning, amidst snow-flakes thickly falling, his head rolled into the basket of the guillotine. Again, I remember the confidential preparatory meetings held in Mazzini's little room for that Sicilian rising of 1860, into the planning of which Garibaldi—for reasons I cannot

here explain—was at first not initiated. Yet, after the insurrection had been kept fully alive for six weeks under Rosolino Pilo, it was by the landing of the Thousand that the leader of the Red Shirts brought that revolution to a triumphant issue. I remember the special message Garibaldi sent to me through a trusty person before he started for the heroic expedition which failed at Aspromonte. He wished to inform me of the urgent reasons which compelled him to act, so as to prevent a dark plot hatched between Napoleon III. and Ratazzi—a plot directed both against Mexican independence and against Germany on the Rhine. I remember the confidential conversation I had with Garibaldi at the Isle of Wight in 1864, before his triumphant entry into London, when, as the appointed speaker of the London Germans, I presented to him, in company with Freiligrath, Kinkel, and a number of prominent compatriots, an address of welcome. Venice was then not gained yet for Italy, nor was her natural capital, Rome.

The dreams of Italian patriots, at least as regards the unity of their nation, are now realized. No longer is the peninsula a mere “geographical idea.” Though not a republic, the country is at any rate not troubled by any complication of different dynastic interests. Much has yet to be done for the material welfare of the peasant and artisan classes. Proper stress is laid upon this—as I find from private intercourse—by that eminent historian and statesman, Professor Villari, now a member of the Cabinet, who came last year to London as one of the delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference of deputies from various countries. If France and Russia were not possible causes of disturbance to the peace of Europe; if Italy, happily bound in alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary for mutual defence, were not compelled, by the dangers lurking in the West and the East, to keep up costly armaments on land and on sea, the bettering of the lot of her working classes would certainly be an easier task. “But expensive as these armaments are, it would cost Italy much more,” as the *Riforma* has rightly said, “if she were to lay herself open to the risk of an attack.”

This is the third French Republic since 1792. With what enthusiasm was its second proclamation hailed, in 1848, throughout Europe! Unfortunately the peasant masses—two-thirds, or more, of the population at that time—were still sunk in ignorance; thanks to the outrageous state of popular instruction,

which had been neglected in spite of the many revolutions the country had gone through. In many departments, in 1848, more than seventy-five per cent. were unable to read and write. Even so late as 1865, there were departments with 60, 65, 69, 72, and 75½ per cent. similarly situated. I recollect that in 1848 there were peasants who believed Napoleon I. to be still alive, and that the Bonapartean Pretender, who was a candidate for the Presidency, was this identical *petit caporal*. Other peasants were made to believe by reactionary agents that King Louis Philippe had been driven from power by a palace revolution, in which Duke Rollin (*le Duc Rollin*, that is, Ledru-Rollin) and his courtesan, La Martine (Lamartine), were the chief actors! When Napoleon III., in 1854, paid a visit at the English Court, he, with cynical amusement, told the Prince Consort that on his way with the Empress Eugénie to Biarritz the people through a large portion of the South of France cried: “*Vive Marie Louise!*” (The consort of Napoleon I.). Napoleon III. also told Prince Albert that on a former journey he had heard cries of: “*Enfin violâ le vieux revenu!*” (“At last the old one has come back!”)

With so backward an agricultural population, great care ought to have been taken as regards the system of political suffrage. The whole class of electors under Louis Philippe had not comprised more than about 200,000, an absurdly small number among about 35,000,000 people; that is, something like 10,000,000 males. Yet it was no less a mistake to extend the suffrage the day after the Revolution of February to the whole male population. At all events, the knowledge of reading and writing ought to have been made a condition to the exercise of the vote. And, furthermore, electoral districts might have been so arranged for a while as to give to the more cultured cities a proportionately larger representation than to the benighted country districts; all this, it need not be said, only as protective measures for the time being, until the rural males should become better educated.

This is a question on which I have had many an earnest discussion, during long years of proscription, with Ledru-Rollin (“the Father of Universal Suffrage”), Louis Blanc, and other French friends. Ledru-Rollin certainly would never hear of such restrictions. His name was too much historically bound up with the introduction of unlimited universal suffrage. Louis Blanc, privately, readily acknowledged the force of arguments



which had the maintenance of the Republican cause for their object. Still, he, like some others, always ended by saying that he dared not move in the matter. It is difficult, indeed, to go back upon a measure of that kind, if once it is passed. Looking at the course of events no one can deny that universal and equal suffrage, without any modification, has given France twenty years of political serfdom under Napoleon, and finally brought about for her a great downfall as regards European standing.

Very few French Republicans—to this, too, I must testify, however reluctantly—foresaw the full danger involved in Louis Bonaparte's election as President. How often we were at issue with them between 1849 and 1851, in pointing out the probability of the success of a *coup d'état*, unless they were able to forestall it by timely action! Our friends uniformly underrated the capabilities of "Badinguet" or of that gang of needy adventurers who surrounded him. "Even if he attempted a *coup d'état*," they often said, "he would fall under the weight of universal derision!" They were badly awakened from their optimistic dream in the night of December 2. I may add that I was startled, a few years ago, on finding that the Boulanger danger was equally underrated by my French Republican friends—not only by the younger ones who had not had the experience of the gradual coming up of Napoleon III., but even by some of the older generation, who had themselves gone through imprisonment, transportation, and exile under Louis Bonaparte. This want of judgment in men otherwise distinguished as writers or scientists, and even prominent in political affairs, impressed me most painfully. I wrote to them letter after letter full of warning. It is true, when the danger had at last come to a head, and a few more days of hesitation might again have decided the fate of the Republic in the Cæsarean sense, all these friends at last saw clearly into the matter; each of them, by letter, then acknowledged to me, with a degree of contrition, that he had been woefully in error as to the character, the aims, and objects of Boulanger.

The neglected intellectual condition of the peasant population had been a main cause of the destruction of the French Republic of 1848. Another cause was the impracticable communistic theory which had gained hold on a numerically small but ardently active group of Democrats, whose propaganda culminated at Paris in the terrible street battles of June, 1848. It is now a

well-established historical fact that Bonapartist and Royalist agents had helped to fan the flame of this insurrection for purposes of their own. Victor Schoelcher, the veteran French Senator, proved this years ago ; and Louis Blanc, too, Socialist as he was, acknowledged it. When the alienated brothers of the Republican party, the Moderates and the Socialists, had grasped each other by the throat, and thousands had been killed or transported, the prospects of the Napoleonic Pretender became brighter ; for he posed on the one hand as a “Savior of Society” and “Restorer of Order,” and yet, on the other, tried to keep in touch with advanced Socialists.

Add to this that, unhappily, the Republican party, in a great many of its members, was tainted then with the policy of conquest in the direction of the Rhine. From such policy to Cæsarism is but a step. Republicans and Bonapartists had often been mixed up in a common conspiracy, both under the Bourbon Restoration and under Louis Philippe. “To tear up the Treaty of 1815”—by which Germany, after all, had simply reacquired a portion of her own, and the Netherlands had been restored to her independence—was a common expression of French Democrats and Imperialists for many years. I have had bitter personal experience of this state of feeling among my French friends. Whilst upholding their Republican cause in public I had many a private encounter with them on this hankering after the Rhine frontier all along the river. With frequent entreaty I urged the better-minded among them, shortly before the war of 1870, to do all in their power towards preventing an outbreak of hostilities, “as it could only entail a signal defeat, and a well-merited one, upon their country.” None of them believed in this latter possibility.

It was in 1869 that one of those aggressive Chauvinists, suddenly losing all control over himself, said, in my own house, before compatriots of mine : “When France shall be a Republic again, we shall march on the Rhine, even if we get the whole of Germany upon our back ! (*même si nous aurions toute l’Allemagne sur le dos*).” I replied : “Take care ; for if once you have her on your back, you will not get rid of her very soon ! (*Prenez garde ! Si, une fois, vous l’aurez sur le dos, vous ne vous débarrasserez pas d’elle si vite !*)” I then rose, as a sign that further conversation on this subject was not desirable. Our fire-eating French friend, whom I had never before suspected of such sentiments, and with

whom I had coöperated until then in the heartiest manner in the cause of Mexican independence and of President Juarez against the usurper Maximilian, soon afterwards made his exit.

The German victories practically gave France the Republic. Much has been done within the last few years to found a thorough system of popular instruction; and that is one of the most promising features of the present commonwealth—let priestlings rave as much as they like against a “Godless Republic.” In the interest of European freedom in general we must hope that that which has been regained through defeat on the battlefield will not be jeopardized anew through senseless military adventures. A French victory—the most unlikely thing in such a case—would saddle France with the rule of the successful general, when once more the Republic would go down. A renewed overthrow of French arms—which may be predicted with safety—would be the overthrow also of the system of government under which the defeat had taken place. Napoleon I., when beaten, was followed by a Bourbon restoration. Napoleon III., when beaten, was followed by the Republic. The Republic, if beaten, would have to make way for a Royalist régime. All sensible wellwishers of progress anxiously desire, therefore, the maintenance of peace, rejoicing meanwhile in the continued existence of the third Republic, which has already outlived the usual span of life of the various forms of government in France since her great Revolution.

When a number of the most eminent generals and statesmen of Hungary were strung upon the gallows at Arad, in 1849, there were but few who believed in the future resurrection of the self-government of that country. How thankful Magyar exiles were for anything which a few men of other nationalities did, during dreary years of oppression, in the way of an advocacy of the claims of their nation! By the persistent labor of Francis Deak, and through the victory, first of the Italian cause on the fields of Lombardy, and then of Prussian arms against Austria, Hungary regained her autonomy to the fullest extent conformable with her safety against Russian and Panslavic designs. She is one of the oldest Parliamentary countries of Europe, and her Parliament now reigns supreme. Those once prosecuted as guilty of high treason occupy the foremost positions in the land. Kossuth himself is only a voluntary exile. Hungary has a perfectly free press, and the largest amount of self-administration in town, vil-

lage, and country. She has also a national militia of her own, as a safeguard of her institutions. In short, the Hapsburg dynasty has had to bow down before the vanquished. Sometimes I think of the evening when Count Teleki, after a friendly dinner at which General Klapka, the German poets Freiligrath and Kinkel, and the writer of this article, were present, left London to go back to his native land, where soon afterwards he mysteriously ended his life by a revolver shot. When I compare the condition in which Hungary was even then with what it is now, the transformation is only a degree less wonderful than the one effected in Italy, where a monument is being raised in honor of Mazzini by the Government and the Parliament of Italy, the king himself contributing 100,000 lire.

Shall I speak, in conclusion, of Poland? I have seen General Skrczynecki, one of the leaders of the war of Independence of 1830-31; Lelewel, the historian; and Worczell, the ex-Senator, all men of that famous and heroic rising which ended with the "restoration of order at Warsaw." In 1849 I aided, in France, in the negotiation with General Mieroslawski for bringing him over to a command during the German Revolution. I have known General Langiewicz, the Dictator of the Revolution of 1863-64. Through the envoy of the secret National Government at Warsaw, Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin, and I had been informed, many weeks beforehand, of the very day when that rising would begin, which took the whole of Europe by surprise. The case of Poland has, therefore, always been present to my mind. But though Switzerland has been reformed in our time; though Germany has been reconstructed; though Italy is now made into a nation; though France has regained her republican institutions; and though Hungary also has achieved an extraordinary success, Poland still awaits her re-embodiment. To most men that may seem well-nigh an impossibility now. Yet, if the Russian Government were heedless enough to venture upon an aggression in Europe which would bring upon her a retribution by a coalition of Powers, even Poland might get her chance. In that case, the present generation would, in all likelihood, see a notable reconstruction, tantamount to the building up of a protecting wall against the inroad of a political barbarism which aims at "making Europe Cossack."

KARL BLIND.